



*Bernard C. "Jack" Young
Mayor*

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



*Chris Ryer
Director*

May 14, 2019

REQUEST: Concept Review- Construct a Six-Story Multi-Use Building and Rehabilitate a Portion of the Historic Structure

ADDRESS: 400 Park Avenue (Howard Street Commercial Historic District)

RECOMMENDATION: Concept Approval with Conditions

APPLICANT: Park Avenue Partners LLC

STAFF: Stacy Montgomery

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

Howard Street Commercial Historic District

Situated within the historic retail core of Baltimore City, the Howard Street Commercial historic district demonstrates distinctive characteristics of modestly scaled 19th and early 20th century commercial architecture. The buildings in the district represented smaller, specialized retailers in buildings that transitioned from primarily residential to commercial use at the turn of the 20th century.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description

Located at the northwest corner of Park Avenue and West Mulberry Street, 400 Park Avenue is a large, empty lot that was most recently the site of a 2-story parking deck constructed in the 1950s. The parking deck was demolished in December of 2018 with the approval of the Commission (more information provided in the background section). The building at 214 West Mulberry Street is an early 19th century side-gable, end of group rowhouse with a gable dormer that is obscured by an elaborate Italianate cornice. The entire site is sloped from east to west, with the highest point of the lot being along Park Avenue and the lowest point being at Tyson Street.

BACKGROUND

- This property is included within the boundaries of the Howard Street Commercial local historic district.
- This property is being developed in conjunction with the properties at 400 Park Avenue, 214 W. Mulberry Street, and 406-414 Park Avenue. The work to 400 Park

Avenue and 214 W. Mulberry Street will be reviewed in this hearing. The work to the properties at 406-414 Park Avenue will be reviewed at the staff level.

- At the January 9, 2018 CHAP Hearing, the Commission determined that the parking deck at 400 Park Avenue did not contribute to the Howard Street Historic District and was approved for demolition. The deck was demolished in December of 2018.
- At the January 8, 2019, CHAP hearing the Commission determined that the property at 214 West Mulberry Street is historically and architecturally significant and contributing to the historic district. The Commission approved the following staff recommendation:
Staff recommends a determination that the building is contributing to the Howard Street Commercial Historic District. Staff further recommends that the applicant explore incorporating all or a portion of the building into the new development prior to returning for Demolition Hearing II.
- At the February 12, 2019 CHAP hearing the commission heard the staff report, the applicant's presentation, and public testimony for Demolition Hearing II - Determination of Substantial Hardship and tabled the decision, allowing the applicant to explore more funding opportunities for full or partial building retention and to provide time for public understanding of the hardship claim made by the applicant.
- At the March 12, 2019 CHAP Hearing, the Commission heard a continuation of the Demolition Hearing II, wherein the applicant presented an option where the front (gable) portion of the building at 214 West Mulberry Street would be preserved and incorporated into an adjacent new development. The Commission approved the following staff recommendation:

Move staff recommendation to approve the request for the retention of the front third of the historic building and incorporation of the historic building into an adjacent new building and the demolition of the rear two-thirds of the historic building as because:

- *The demolition will be without substantial detriment to the public welfare;*
- *The demolition will be without substantial derogation from the intents and purposes to the CHAP ordinance; and*
- *The denial of a demolition permit for the rear two-thirds of the building will result in substantial hardship to the applicant.*

Staff recommends that the applicant return with a more fully developed design that thoughtfully addresses the transitions between the historic building and the new construction, so the height, scale and massing of the new construction does not overwhelm the historic building. Staff recommends that the applicant specifically consider the following in the new design:

- *The design of the new storefronts along Mulberry Street.*
- *The setback of the façade of the new construction along Mulberry Street.*
- *The relative floor-to-floor heights between the buildings.*

- *The fenestration patterns on the upper stories.*
- *The treatment of the walls of the new construction that about the side and rear elevations of the historic Martick's building.*

PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

The applicant proposes to construct a six-story, mixed-use building, and rehabilitate a portion of the front (gable) portion of the historic Martick's building (214 West Mulberry Street). The building will have two primary facades, one on Park Avenue and one on West Mulberry Street. The side elevation will front on Tyson Street behind the historic Martick's building.

The new building will cover the majority of the lot, with the northeast corner being cut back with a screened/gated entry to the residential portion of the building set back on this plane. The first story of the new building will be glass with multiple storefront entries, while the five upper stories will be residential with smaller window openings. The first story is set back from the rest of the façade and the upper stories are supported by large, round concrete columns. A custom wood screen treatment will be used to emphasize entry points and to screen recessed balconies on the upper stories. A mural is proposed for half of the Park Avenue façade. The new construction at Tyson Street is set back from the historic Martick's building. A small, 1-story enclosure is proposed behind the Martick's building, but the first story along Tyson Street is fairly open.

To review the new construction, staff applied Chapter 2: Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings, specifically 2.1 Guideline Principals for New Design, 2.2 Site Design, 2.3 Scale and Form, 2.4 Building Features, and 2.5 Materials and Detailing. Staff also applied Chapter 6: Design Guidelines for Artistic Expression, specifically 6.1 General Guidelines and 6.2 Paint.

On the historic Martick's Building, the applicant proposes to restore the front (gable) portion of the building. The windows, which are missing or deteriorated beyond repair, will be replaced; the wood cornice and other features will be preserved and repainted; the roof will be replaced; and the brick will be painted to look like the brick proposed for the new building.

To review the rehabilitation, staff applied Chapter 1: Design Guidelines for Building Exteriors, specifically 1.1 Identifying and Preserving Historic Building Fabric and 1.10 Paint and Color.

ANALYSIS

The applicant proposes to construct a new, 6-story building and rehabilitate a portion of the adjacent historic building. CHAP staff applied Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Chapter 6 of the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines to review this project.

Rehabilitation of Martick's Building

1.1 Identifying and Preserving Historic Building Fabric

- *Identify and assess character-defining features when considering changes to a historic building. Retain character-defining features, such as roof shape, openings for doors and windows, and unique detailing, when repairing, maintaining, or altering a historic building.*

The proposal meets these guidelines. The historic cornice, gable roof, door and window locations will be retained. The windows are deteriorated beyond repair and will require replacement. More information is needed from the applicant before the proposed new doors and windows can be evaluated.

1.10 Paint and Color

- *Masonry that has never historically been painted should not be painted.*
- *Where appropriate, coat soft and damaged (sandblasted) brick with a masonry paint to prevent deterioration. Use masonry paints specifically designed for such conditions.*

The proposal meets these guidelines. The masonry on the side and rear elevations are currently painted. The masonry on the front elevation has been sandblasted. The applicant should carefully select the appropriate paint for this elevation to prevent further damage.

Prior to final approval, the applicant will need to submit further detail on the materials for and treatment of the roof and dormer, specifications for the new windows and doors, paint colors and specific information on how the rear elevation will be treated.

New Construction

2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design

- *Identify the character-defining features of the surrounding historic buildings and streetscape. Design new buildings to visually relate to the historic environment. Respect the established design precedent in the immediate area but do not imitate existing buildings.*
- *Contemporary architectural design that reflects its current time, place, use, and culture is accepted, provided that the design is compatible with the character of the historic district.*

The proposal meets these guidelines. The historic district and surrounding commercial area are home to a wide variety of commercial and mixed-use buildings that vary in height, design, fenestration, and massing. Like most other buildings in this commercial district, the first story is designated for commercial activity. The design of the new construction is contemporary with subtle design elements that elude to the neighborhood's history as part of the City's Chinatown.

2.2 Site Design

- *Primary buildings should have a similar orientation and relationship to the street as the existing buildings. Primary entrances and facades should be located, oriented, and sequenced to be consistent with the pattern of entrances and facades in the neighborhood.*
- *New construction at corners or abutting public spaces require special consideration in the design of entrances and multiple, publicly visible facades.*

The proposal partially meets these guidelines. While the proposed new construction generally has the same orientation as the surrounding buildings, there is no main entrance fronting on either main street, which is the predominant pattern in the historic district. The applicant should place more emphasis on a main entrance that fronts on one of the two main streets.

2.3 Scale and Form

- *The scale and form of new buildings must be compatible with the height and depth of surrounding buildings. Where there is variation of building height within the immediate neighborhood, the new building should generally relate to the predominant pattern.*
- *New buildings must complement the massing of surrounding buildings, including the proportion of solid surfaces (walls) to voids (window and door openings.) Respect the characteristic rhythm (fenestration, bays, rooflines, etc.) of existing buildings.*
- *Design the new building to be proportional to surrounding buildings. Consider important building proportions such as floor-to-floor heights, the size and placement of windows and doors, the scale of articulated elements such as porches, overhanging cornices, and bay windows.*

The proposed new construction mostly meets these guidelines. The proposed new construction will be just under 75 feet tall (74.5 feet). The district has a variety of building heights, which is consistent with the development pattern of the area. The fur storage building at 409 Tyson Street is over 80 feet tall, and the new apartment building on the south side of Mulberry Street is 75 feet tall. The historic Martick's building is 30 feet tall at the top of the gable peak and 33 feet to the top of the chimney. Taller buildings in the 400 block of North Howard Street are 50 to 70 feet tall. Given the variety in height, a taller building is appropriate here.

The setback from the rear of the historic Martick's building, and the storefront at the lower level on the Mulberry Street elevation keeps the new construction from totally overwhelming the historic Martick's building.

Although there are a variety of fenestration patterns in the area, there are not many buildings with an irregular fenestration pattern like the proposed new construction. The

windows align horizontally, but the vertical alignment is atypical for the area and reflects the more contemporary design of the building.

2.4 Building Features

2.4.1 Building Entrances

- *Design building entrances to enhance the connection between the street and the building interior.*
- *Respect the existing pattern of building entrances when locating new entrances.*

The proposal needs to be altered to fully meet this design guideline. The proposed storefronts along West Mulberry Street meet these guidelines; however, the entry on Park Avenue needs more emphasis to be in keeping with the other entrances on the street. Furthermore, the location of the residential entrance, set back from Park Avenue, behind a gate/screen does not enhance the connection between the street and the building interior.

2.5 Materials and Detailing

2.5.1 Doors and Windows

- *Design doors and windows to be compatible with the placement, scale, type, and operation of doors and window and their openings in surrounding buildings.*

The proposal mostly meets this design guideline. As previously discussed, the placement of the fenestration is atypical for the district; however, the scale, type, and operation are compatible. The applicant will need to provide final specifications for the storefronts, doors and windows in order to obtain final approval.

2.5.2 Materials

- *Choose building materials that are compatible with the color, size, texture, scale, and quality of building materials used in surrounding buildings. Where a particular material is dominant within an area, utilize that material in the new design.*
- *Cover and finish exterior walls with quality materials that are compatible with surrounding buildings. Traditional materials existing within the historic district, such as wood, brick, and stone, are preferred.*

The proposal mostly meets this guideline. The use of brick for the majority of the street-facing elevations is compatible with the brick found throughout the district. Since there are a number of painted facades in the district, the use of a non-red brick is also appropriate. The use of fiber cement panel on the Park Avenue elevation does not meet

this guideline. The applicant should use a more traditional material, like brick, on this elevation. The applicant will also need to provide specifications and samples of the final exterior materials in order to obtain final approval.

6.1 General Considerations

- *Alterations made to historic buildings for arts-based projects should be reversible and not damage historic architectural features.*

The proposal meets this guideline. No historic features will be impacted by the proposed mural on Park Avenue.

6.2 Paint

- *CHAP shall consider paint colors and schemes to be reversible. A broad range of colors and schemes may be permissible as long as the paint scheme does not overwhelm the historic character of the immediate surrounding area.*
- *In most cases do not place murals on primary facades of historic buildings. Side facades of buildings are appropriate for murals as long as they do not conceal historically significant architectural details such as cornices, bay windows, or decorative terracotta. CHAP review is limited to the location of murals; content of proposed murals are not within CHAP purview.*

The proposal meets this guideline, as there are a number of murals in the district and the mural will not obscure any historic features since it will be located entirely on a new building.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

There is no neighborhood architectural review committee here. Notice has been sent to the Downtown Partnership, Market Center Merchants Association, Mount Vernon Belvedere Association, and Baltimore Heritage.

RECOMMENDATION:

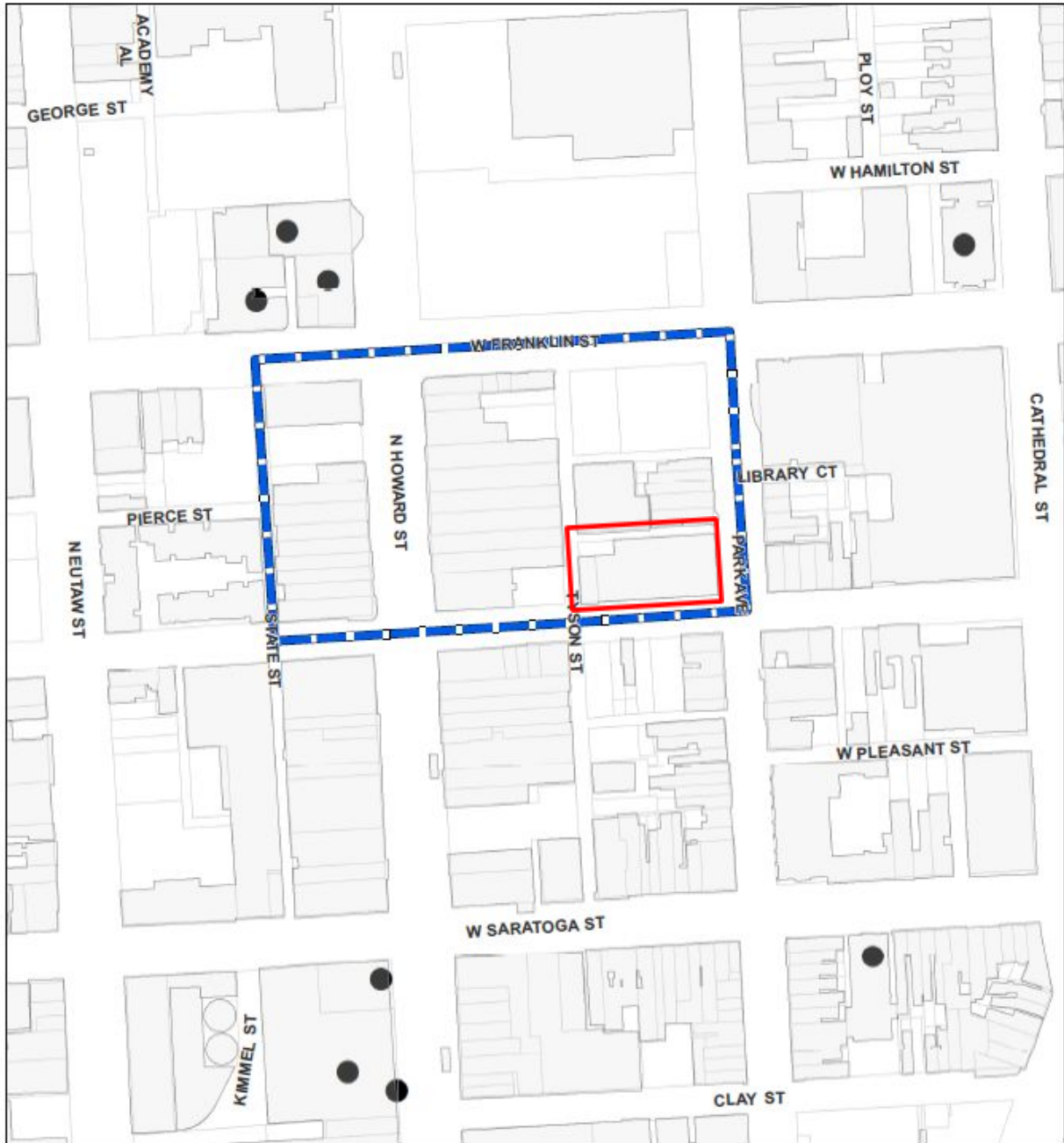
The proposed new construction and rehabilitation of the historic building largely meets Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Chapter 6 of the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. In order to fully meet the design guidelines, the applicant should alter the proposal to place more emphasis on the Park Avenue entrance and the entrance to the residential building that is located away from Park Avenue. The applicant should also use a more traditional building material on the Park Avenue elevation rather than the fiber cement panels that are proposed.

Staff recommends concept approval for the construction of a six-story, mixed-use building with the rehabilitation of the adjacent front (gable) portion of the historic building with the following conditions:



- 1) The applicant alters the proposal to place more emphasis on the Park Avenue entrance and the entrance to the residential building that is located away from Park Avenue.
- 2) The applicant alters the proposal to use a more traditional building material on the Park Avenue elevation rather than the fiber cement panels that are proposed.
- 3) The applicant returns to the full commission with the final proposed materials and treatments for the new construction, and the proposed windows, doors, paint colors, and roof and dormer plan for the historic building.



Eric Holcomb
Director



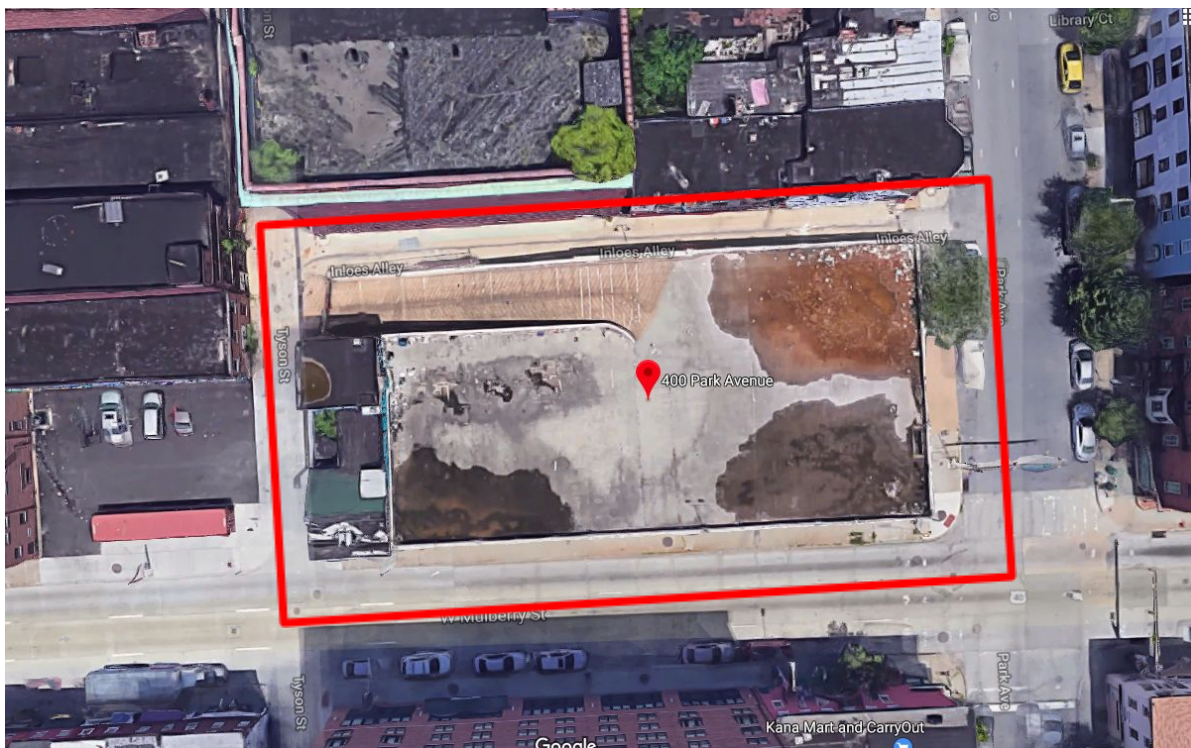
Howard Street Commercial Historic District

 Howard Street Commercial District
 Existing Baltimore City Landmarks

400 Park Avenue (Howard Street Commercial Historic District) – Construct New 6-Story Building and Rehabilitate A Portion of the Adjacent Historic Building



Aerial view of historic district and surrounding buildings



Aerial view of site

400 Park Avenue (Howard Street Commercial Historic District) – Construct New 6-Story Building and Rehabilitate A Portion of the Adjacent Historic Building



400 Park Avenue from Park Avenue Facing West



400 Park Avenue and 214 West Mulberry Street facing East

400 Park Avenue (Howard Street Commercial Historic District) – Construct New 6-Story Building and Rehabilitate A Portion of the Adjacent Historic Building